



2010 University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES)

Volunteer and Community Service Participation

The Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO) is the research and assessment office within UCLA's Student Affairs organization. The mission of SAIRO is to support the learning and development of the whole student by providing reliable, timely and useful information about students and their experiences; by developing the capacity of Student Affairs and other stakeholders to collect, interpret, and utilize data to enhance the quality of students' educational experience and environment; and by helping Student Affairs units assess and document the effectiveness of their programs and practices.

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For more information or to submit a data request, please contact SAIRO (310) 206-8470 or sairo@saonet.ucla.edu Visit us at www.sairo.ucla.edu

Executive Summary

Participation in community service/volunteer work is an important part of many undergraduates' experience at UCLA. This brief summarizes undergraduates' participation in 1) community service, 2) service learning, and 3) other community-focused activities based on data from the 2010 University of California Undergraduate Experiences Survey (UCUES).

Over 68% of respondents indicated that they participated in community service in the past year, with 23% reporting having participated in over 50 total hours of service within the year. UCLA undergraduates highly value community service experiences, and 87% reported that opportunities to connect their academic work with community service experiences were important to them. Further, 78% indicated that participation in their community service activities at UCLA influenced their desire to continue similar activities following graduation.

Most students found their community service opportunities through on-campus student organizations (53%), their own research (33%), or a fraternity/sorority (20%). The most popular foci of community service organizations in which students participated included: health, education (Pre-K to community college), mentoring, tutoring, and access and success in higher education.

The survey data indicate that a large number of UCLA undergraduates are motivated to participate in community service activities and suggest that the key to further increasing participation may lie partly in finding ways to link students with available opportunities.

2010 UCUES Administration and Respondents

The University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES) was administered to 25,546 UCLA undergraduates in Spring Quarter 2010. Approximately 33% of UCLA undergraduates responded to the 2010 UCUES. Compared to the 2009-10 UCLA undergraduate population, women, direct-entry students, senior-level students, and Asian/Pacific Islander students were slightly over-represented in the UCUES sample. Men, transfer students, freshmen, sophomores, and juniors, White students, and international students were slightly under-represented in the UCUES sample.

INTRODUCTION

This brief summarizes UCLA undergraduate students' involvement in three types of community-related activities: 1) community service, 2) service learning courses, and 3) other community-focused activities were assessed in the 2010 University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES).

Survey questions were located in two sections of the survey, 1) the Core and 2) the Community and Civic Engagement Module. The two sections differ in the number of respondents who were assigned to complete the section. All survey respondents were assigned to complete the Core (N=7,545). However, the Core contained only one broad question assessing community and volunteer participation. The Community and Civic Engagement Module was one of several modules to which students were randomly assigned. This module included in-depth questions regarding community/volunteer work, but only a select portion of the overall sample was assigned to and completed this section (17%; N=1,312). Consequently the percentage for volunteer/community service participation may differ slightly between items in the Core and in the Module.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PARTICIPATION

Participation in Community Service

Community service participation specifically refers to volunteer work intended to help a particular social or political cause. Participation in community service activities was measured in several ways. In the Core, (in which 7,545 students provided responses), students were asked to indicate the number of hours in a typical week that they spent performing community service or volunteer activities. Fifty-eight percent reported participating in one or more hours per typical week during the current academic year. Of those who indicated that they participated in such activities, the majority, 70%, participated in one to five hours per week.

In the Community and Civic Engagement Module, 1,312 students (approximately 17% of the overall sample) were assigned to complete the section were asked to respond "yes" or "no" to the filter question, "During this academic year, have you done community service work either on- or off-campus?" Their response to this question determined whether they would continue on to fill out more detailed questions related to their community service participation. Sixty-eight percent indicated that they had participated in community service either on- or off-campus, which is a slightly higher participation rate than reported in the Core.

The different way in which the participation questions were asked (i.e., asked in the Core as a time diary item and asked in the module as a Yes/No response) most likely accounts for the 10% discrepancy between participation rates. In the time-diary question about volunteer participation, students who participated in one-time (e.g., volunteered at a soup kitchen for Thanksgiving, participated in UCLA's Volunteer Day) or infrequent volunteer activities may have been reluctant to indicate that they participated in one or more hours per week on average. In contrast, the self-reported participation rate in the Community and Civic Engagement Module may more accurately capture both regular as well as infrequent or one-time participants.

In the Community and Civic Engagement Module, students were asked to estimate the total number of hours in the last year that they had spent participating in all forms of community service, which includes service through clubs, courses, and one-time events as well as service during the summer. Nearly one-quarter (21%) reported participating in over 50 total hours of community service in the past academic year, and 11% participated in over 100 hours.

Views and Motivations for Participating in Community Service

Students reported positive views about participating in community service. For over 78% of respondents, opportunities for community service while at UCLA were important to them, and 87% felt that opportunities to connect their academic work with community-based experience were important to them. These findings are interesting in that while students wholeheartedly agree that having opportunities to participate in community service is very important, a lower percentage actually participate, perhaps indicating a need to better link students with available opportunities.

Respondents were asked to identify specific factors that motivated their involvement in community service. Table 1 displays the number of respondents and percentages for all response options.

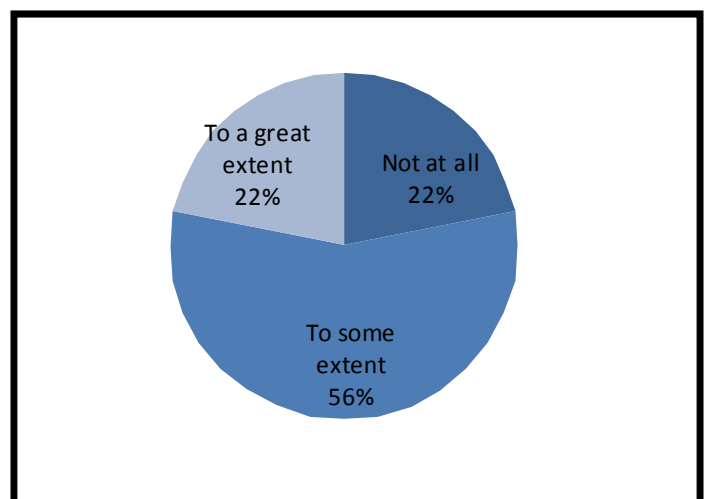
The most common reasons for participation in community service included the desire to become a better citizen and community participant (71%), one's belief in the cause (69%), an interest in a unique/interesting opportunity (64%), motivation to change conditions in a community (62%), and having the opportunity to learn new things (59%). Performing community service due a requirement by an academic program or fraternity/sorority were the least common motivations for participation.

Current participation in community service was also reported as influential on intentions to pursue community service post-graduation (See Figure 1). Seventy-eight percent of respondents indicated that participation in community service activities at UCLA has influenced their desire to continue community service activities after graduation.

Table I. Reasons for Participating in Community Service

Reasons for Participation	N	%
Become a better citizen and community participant	604	71
Belief in cause	585	69
Unique/interesting opportunity to participate	537	64
Change conditions in community	525	62
Opportunity to learn new things	498	59
Opportunities to develop leadership skills	455	54
Strengthen resume for grad school or employment	424	50
Encouragement from friends/family	314	37
Location where work was conducted	305	36
Opportunity to enhance academic achievement	304	36
Required by fraternity/sorority	137	16
Required as part of academic program	117	14
Other	23	3

Figure 1. Extent Current Community Service Participation Influenced Desire for Participation After Graduation



Ways to Seek Out Community Service Opportunities

Students indicated how they became involved in community service work. If they were involved in more than one form of community service, they responded for the experience that had been the largest time commitment. Table 2 summarizes the various ways that students found their community service opportunities.

Table 2. Ways to Seek Out Community Service

Sources of Community Service Opportunities	N	%
Through student organization on campus	481	53
Found work on my own	302	33
Through fraternity/sorority	184	20
Through university department/program	174	19
Through religious organization/church	164	18
Through a related class	112	12
Through internship	75	8
Through a program where I received course credit	72	8
Through a formal paid service program (AmeriCorps, VISTA)	56	6

For most students, volunteer opportunities were identified through student organizations on campus (53%), their own research (33%), fraternity/sorority (20%), university department/program (19%), or religious organization/church (18%). Surprisingly, few students mentioned learning about their community service opportunities through more formal venues such as a program where they received course credit or through a formal service program.

Students were asked to indicate from a list, the specific focus of the organization where they performed their community service and were allowed to select more than one response. Table 3 (Page 5) displays responses for 38 categories/types of organizations.

The most popular foci (i.e., selected by 100 or more students) included:

- Health
- Education – Pre-K to Community College
- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Access and success in higher education
- Hunger
- Child care
- Environmental/sustainability issues
- Poverty

SERVICE LEARNING COURSES

Service learning courses involve participation with non-profits, citizen groups, or governmental entities to support infrastructure or programming that allows these groups to meet community-identified needs and issues. Students work on a wide range of issues and perform a wide variety of tasks and tie in their experiences with their course work. Some examples include working in after school programs, homeless shelters, Pre-K to 12 education, Adult Basic Education, citizenship education, clinics, employment programs, violence prevention efforts, the environment, and the arts.

During the past academic year (2009-10) 12% of respondents reported enrolling in one or more courses with a service learning component. Of those respondents, the majority (72%) reported completing 25 hours of service or less for their service learning course. Table 4 provides additional details about the amount of total service hours completed for service learning courses.

Table 4. Total Service Hours for Service-Learning Course

# of Service Hours	N	%
1-10 hrs	42	42
11-25 hrs	30	30
26-50 hrs	21	21
More than 50 hrs	6	6

Table 3. Focus of Community Service Organization

Focus of Organization Where Community Service was Done	N
Health	222
Education- Pre-K to Community College	195
Mentoring	194
Tutoring	166
Access and Success in Higher Education	152
Hunger	150
Child Care	139
Environment/Sustainability Issues	133
Poverty	102
Housing/Homelessness	96
HIV/AIDS	93
Other	76
Diversity/Multiculturalism	69
Arts, Community/Public Arts	63
Reading/Writing	62
Civil Rights/Human Rights	62
Arts Education	55
Senior/Elder Services	54
Immigrants/Migrant Worker Rights	50
Disability Issues	49
International Issues	44
Mental Health	41
Women's Issues	41
Animal Welfare	33
Economic Development	30
Agriculture/Nutrition	25
Global Citizenship	21
Legal Aid	20
Sexual Assault	20
Conflict Resolution, Disaster Preparedness, Substance Abuse, Technology, Transportation, Voting, Parenting Criminal/Criminal Justice, Tax form preparation	<20

OTHER COMMUNITY-FOCUSED EXPERIENCES

Participation in Other Community-Focused Experiences

In addition to voluntary community service activities, students were asked about their other critical community involvement activities. They indicated the extent that they were involved community-focused activities that were not community service or service learning experiences. Figure 2 displays the percentage of respondents who completed one or more quarters of such service. The most popular “other community-focused experiences” included internship or clinical practicum (23%), academic

field study (14%), study abroad or other international experiences (13%), and community-based research (10%).

Types of Other Community-Focused Experiences

Students were asked to indicate the specific issues/activities in which they participated. Figure 3 displays the findings. The top five included: charity (38%), community empowerment and development (34%), experiences related to academic learning and development (32%), career or professional development experiences (27%), protest or march for a particular cause (19%), and religious-related work (19%).

Figure 2. Participation in Other Community-Focused Experiences During the Academic Year

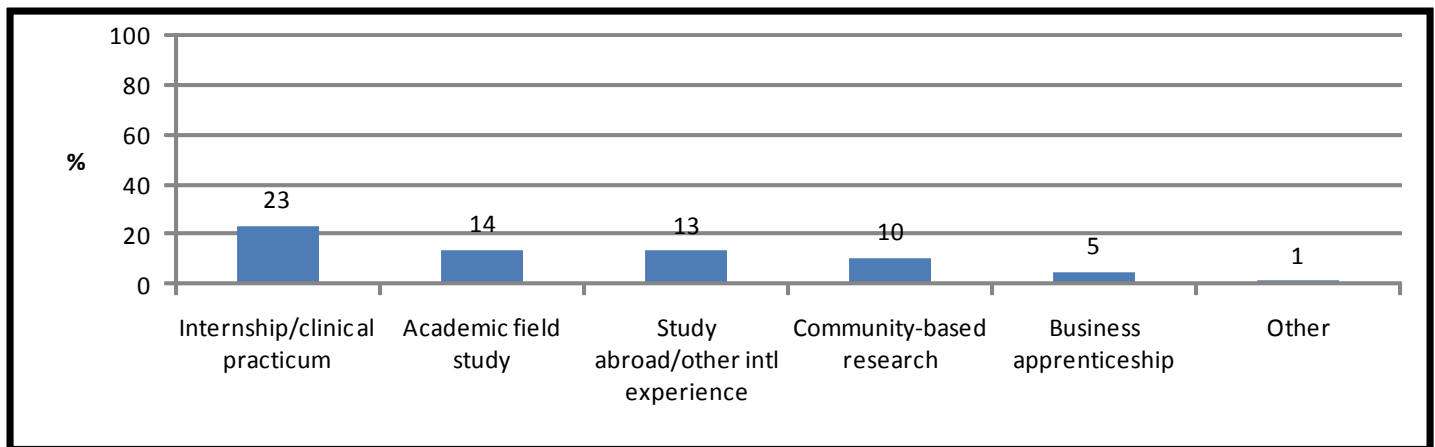


Figure 3. Type of Other Community-Focused Experience

